

Message Text

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

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MEXICO CITY - FOR AMBASSADOR MAILLIARD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: ELECTION OF OAS SECRETARY GENERAL

1. THE OAS PREPARATORY COMMITTEE (A COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE) ON JANUARY 22 AGREED BY CONSENSUS THAT THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS APRIL WOULD CONSIDER REVISING THE RULES GOVERNING THE ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL. (ELECTIONS TO FILL THESE OFFICES WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE SAME GENERAL ASSEMBLY.)

2. THIS MOVE, WHICH WAS UNOPPOSED, OPENS THE DOOR FOR NEW CANDIDATES FOR THE SECRETARY GENERAL RACE. THE CURRENT RULES ON ELECTIONS IN THE OAS, IF APPLIED, COULD STRONGLY FAVOR THE ELECTION OF ONE OF THE TWO DECLARED CANDIDATES, PARAGUAY'S SAPENA PASTOR OR THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S GOMEZ BERGES.

3. THE CURRENT RULES PROVIDE THAT ONLY THE TWO CANDIDATES WITH THE MOST VOTES IN THE FIRST BALLOT MAY APPEAR ON THE NEXT FOUR BALLOTS. ONLY AFTER THE FIFTH BALLOT MAY NEW

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CANDIDATES RUN. OUR LATEST COUNT INDICATES 16 COUNTRIES

ARE COMMITTED TO ONE OF THE TWO ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES.

4. THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE'S ACTION NOW MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO DRAFT NEW RULES WHICH WOULD PERMIT A COUNTRY TO HONOR ITS COMMITMENT TO A CANDIDATE ON THE FIRST BALLOT AND THEN PRESENT ITS OWN CANDIDATE IN THE SECOND BALLOT.

B. FYI ONLY: THE SECRETARY GENERAL RACE IS AT PRESENT EXTREMELY CONFUSED. THOUGH SAPENA PASTOR HAS NINE PUBLIC COMMITMENTS, AT LEAST ONE OF THOSE (EL SALVADOR) MAY BE COMING UNSTUCK; AND IN ANY EVENT THE POSSIBILITY OF SAPENA PICKING UP THE THREE ADDITIONAL VOTES NECESSARY FOR HIS ELECTION SEEMS REMOTE. GOMEZ BERGES' CANDIDACY HAS SLIPPED CONSIDERABLY IN RECENT WEEKS.

6. THE STAGE IS NOW SET FOR NEW CANDIDATES TO COME FORWARD. AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA TO THE U.S. ALEJANDRO ORFILA, WOULD LIKE THE JOB; BUT THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SAPENA PASTOR ON THE FIRST BALLOT. SIMILARLY VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. MIGUEL ANGEL BURELLI RIVAS HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST BUT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS EXPRESSED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOMEZ BERGES AND ACCORDING TO THE LATTER, HAS GIVEN THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT A WRITTEN COMMITMENT. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN RUMORS OF COLOMBIAN AND COSTA RICAN CANDIDACIES (PASTRANA AND FACIO, RESPECTIVELY).

7. BURELLI RIVAS' STAR IS RISING AT THE MOMENT. IF THE VENEZUELAN WOULD PROPOSE HIS CANDIDACY, HE WOULD DOUBTLESS HAVE AN EXCELLENT CHANCE OF ELECTION. BUT THERE IS THE OBSTACLE OF VENEZUELA'S COMMITMENT TO GOMEZ BERGES. A COLOMBIAN CANDIDATE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT LLERAS CARMARGO HAD THE POST YEARS AGO, MIGHT ALSO PROSPER. END FYI. KISSINGER

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